



From the Area Director

Year of Changes

2004 has been a year of change for the USDA Rural Development Multi-Family Housing Program. Many changes are now in place to process payments and tenant certifications and implement the Management Interactive Network Connection (MINC) System—and other changes are still to come.

The new 3560 Regulations Interim Rule was published in the Federal Register on November 26, 2004, for a 30-day comment period. You may access this section at: www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html. Then, type in: 3560 Regulations.

Letters were sent to you by Louisiana's USDA Rural Development State Office Multi-Family Housing Division concerning the new processes—and most of you are already very proficient with these processes. We appreciate your patience and cooperation.

This is our last newsletter for 2004, and our staff wishes you and your family a happy and safe holiday season.

Sean Le Blanc

Area Director
Amite Area Office
USDA Rural Development



Tenant Certifications . . . Payment Processing . . . MINC

As you are aware, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, the USDA, Rural Development State Office will process tenant certifications and payments for the Amite Area Office.

If you are not participating in the Management Interactive Network Connection (MINC) System, you must send all monthly payments and tenant certifications that are to be input manually directly to the State Office. The State Office address is:

USDA Rural Development
Multi-Family Housing Division
3727 Government Street
Alexandria, Louisiana 71302

All inquiries regarding processing of tenant certification, payments, or MINC

for our office must be directed to the State Office at (318) 473-7962.

We would like to advise borrowers with complexes of eight or more units, who are not currently transmitting tenant data through MINC, that the new regulations will be out in the very near future, and use of MINC will be MANDATORY.

The State Office sent out packages to each management company regarding MINC.



Rent Increases

Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan

If you have requested rent increases for the year 2005 you must:

- Change the rents on the current Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan;
- Initial the form; and
- Submit the form to our office by January 1, 2005

Please check the Notice to Tenants of Rent/Utility Change for the correct rents and utility allowances. If any errors are found, please contact our office. We do not want any discrepancies on the project worksheet.

MINC Enhancements

If you are now on the Management Interactive Network Connection (MINC) System, you have the capability to input and transmit budgets/quarterly reports electronically. No signatures will be required from you. We will print the budget, review it, and if approved, we will sign and send a copy to you with our approval letter.

Unemployment Benefits

We have noticed some variations in the way unemployment income is handled during the tenant certification process. Each recipient of unemployment benefits receives a letter telling them of the amount of benefits to which they are entitled, and their weekly benefit amount. The tenant certification must be based on the weekly amount the recipient is entitled to receive multiplied times 52 weeks. The tenant must recertify at the time he or she receives the last benefit check or begins a new job.

Other USDA Programs Available

If any of your tenants are interested in homeownership, please have them contact our Single Family Housing division in the Amite Area Office at (985) 748-8751, Ext. 4.



Tooltime Tips

WINTERIZATION

Winter is right around the corner (we think) and with it comes some additional chores that need to happen to help prevent problems in the coming months.



Central Heat

If you have central heating units, please check them to assure they are in good working order and clean. Faulty heating equipment is the leading cause of home fires during this time of the year.



Smoke Alarms

All smoke alarms should be checked to determine if they need new batteries or need to be totally replaced. Typically, you should be replacing batteries every spring and fall.



Dryer Vents

Check the dryer vents in your laundry facilities and units with washer/dryer hookups as they can clog up with flammable lint.



Rain Gutters

Clogged gutters can lead to property damage, so be sure they are clean and free from debris.

Employee Spotlight

Meet Melissa Thompson, Multi-Family Housing Assistant. Melissa is a graduate of Amite High School. She maintained a GPA of 3.5 while participating on the high school dance team, "The Wahoops," for four years. Melissa has been working with Rural Development for two years. While working full time, she also attends college at Southeastern Louisiana University in the evenings and works at Adobe Restaurant in Hammond, Louisiana, during the weekends. Her duties include performing all multi-family housing clerical duties and administrative duties for the entire area office. Melissa enjoys modeling, dancing, and hanging out with her boyfriend. Melissa plans to pursue a degree in marketing and a minor in Spanish. We are lucky to have such a bright, hard-working individual on our staff.



Keeping Area Office Informed

If your property experiences flood, fire, roof problems, etc., be sure to notify our office immediately. We have had instances of fires burning units or buildings, storm damage, drug raids, or other adverse issues, and have not been notified until we either receive tenant or congressional inquiries. Please keep us informed as to what is happening at your complex so we can adequately address inquiries.

Contact Us

Our office e-mail addresses are as follows:

Juiet Schillings:

juiet.schillings@la.usda.gov

Mary LaMarca:

mary.lamarca@la.usda.gov

Kim Martin:

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Melissa Thompson:

melissa.thompson@la.usda.gov

Visit Our Office

Amite Area Office
USDA Service Center
805 West Oak Street
Room 3
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Please share our news with your site managers and maintenance personnel.

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